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ABSTRACT

This manual shares some of the experiences in parent and child education in sexual assault of a group dedicated to alleviating the trauma of sexual assault for victims and their families. The section of the manual about talking to children is arranged in four levels: kindergartners and first graders; second and third graders; fourth and fifth graders; and sixth graders. For each level, general information on sexual assault appropriate for the grade level is presented with an outline of the presentation. Some levels are accompanied by sample presentations, additional material, and questions and answers. Suggestions on how to deal with children who disclose past victimization, knowledge of another's vicimization, or their own current victimization are provided. A section on parent presentations describes frequent sources of parent presentations, background material on sexual assault, and three goals (provide information, stimulate thinking, and work toward change) of presentations. An outline of the parent presentation and sample presentation notes are provided. The appendix includes a discussion of working with parents of child victims of sexual assault and an annotated bibliography of books for children and parents, films for children, and materials on curriculum development. (ABL)

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Talking to Children/ Talking to Parents About Sexual Assault

by Lois Loontjens
King County Rape Relief, Renton, WA

Working notes on talking to children K-5 were provided by Mary Ellen Stone. The original manuscript was organized and typed by Barbara Jordmor.

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PREFACE

King County Rape Relief located in Renton, Washington, is a non-profit corporation founded in 1974 to "alleviate as much as possible the trauma of sexual assault for victims and their families and to ultimately eliminate sexual assault and ensure the freedom to live without fear." (From the by-laws of KCRR).

For ten years we have maintained a twenty-four hour crisis line, provided personal support and advocacy to victims of sexual assault and their families, and provided education and training about sexual assault. Our work is carried out through the efforts of a small paid staff and a large group of volunteers.

Parent and child education has been a part of our work from the beginning. This manual is an attempt to share some of our experience. It was originally intended for use by rape crisis centers in making presentations to children and parents about sexual assault. Three years later it has found a wider audience.

The outlines and notes are simply a starting point for interested speakers to work from. The manual is set up so that there is ample room to make notes and changes. Each section begins on a new page so that parts can be interchanged and sections added and dropped easily.

Talking to Children

INTRODUCTION

Our presentations to children have focused on the basic concepts outlined in the booklet *He Told Me Not To Tell*, also developed by King County Rape Relief:

"Your body belongs to you."

"It's a good idea to tell someone."

"It's not your fault."

We have also used good/bad/confusing touch adapted from Cordelia Kent's (now Cordelia Anderson) Touch Continuum and the MTI film "Who Do You Tell," along with story-telling and 'what-ifs.' More recently "No More Secrets" from ODN Productions has been used. We have tried to encourage children's right to express their own feelings and their right to act on any uncomfortable touch.

The outlines and sample presentations which follow are *one* way to speak to elementary age children. They are certainly not the *only* way.

The stories and 'what ifs' change with each telling, as do the explanations of concepts and the responses to questions.

Any presentation to children will be an uncomfortable compromise between all that we would like to convey and the constraints of limited time, differing values and beliefs, lack of knowledge of the particular children, etc. There are many different approaches.

Most of our presentations have been elementary schools or scout troops. We developed this particular format in response to requests for a one-time presentation. We do *not* believe that this approach can ever replace the kind of on-going teaching we are working toward—teaching where sexual assault prevention is as important as any other teaching about safety. We would like to see this teaching being done at home and in school.

These one-time presentations are a beginning step—to open doors for children, parents and teachers.

KINDERGARTNERS AND FIRST GRADERS

In General

Children of this age (five-, six- and seven-year olds) can usually listen to a speaker for twenty to twenty-five minutes. After that they are too fidgety to listen any more and need to move around or change activities. While they will be attentive to a speaker, most are not accustomed to listening to others in a group, so discussion may be difficult.

Children of this age will probably not let you know if they do not understand, so you will need to watch for behavioral clues such as blank expressions. Other times their responses to your questions will be off the mark and you will need to backtrack.

Family life is very important and they will say things like, "I would go and tell my mommy." All adults, but especially parents, are assumed to have total authority—they are always right.

Children of this age tend to think and to view the world in a very literal fashion. It is difficult (if not impossible) to get across vague ideas or abstract concepts. For example, 'good touch' to a five-year-old can mean petting her/his cat, so this whole area must be specific.

Remember to speak slowly and clearly. Keep the vocabulary simple and try not to use slang. Gestures and a bit of dramatics help a great deal, as do props and visual aids. They are quite interested in stories and 'what-ifs.'

About Sexual Assault

While most have heard of the 'dangerous stranger,' and have been given the traditional warnings, they have little or no concept of what the danger might actually be. Their imaginations are vivid and they tend to imagine the worst. In explaining to them what might actually happen they express interest and little or no embarrassment.

Most have an unclear sense of their own bodies. Using your own body, or a doll or pictures helps them figure things out.

In a single twenty to twenty-five minute presentation it is impossible to really get across the information that they might be exploited by someone they know since this is in direct conflict with their vision of the world. They do understand that it is not fair for someone to touch them when they don't want to be touched. They understand that Suzie (in the first story) has been tricked and that this is not fair. They also understand 'uh-oh' feelings and that it's a good idea to tell someone.

KINDERGARTNERS AND FIRST GRADERS

Outline of Presentation

Introduction
Good touch
Bad touch
Confusing touch
  Story—*Suzie and the Spider*
    Points to emphasize
      Tricking
      'Uh-oh' feelings
  Story—*Jane & Uncle Joe*
    Points to emphasize
      'Uh-oh feelings'
      Who could you tell
Wrap-up/review
    Good touch/bad touch/confusing touch
    'Uh-oh' feeling
    Not fair for someone to trick you
    Tell someone
Thank you

PRESENTATION TO KINDERGARTNERS AND FIRST GRADERS

Introduction

Introduce yourself simply and clearly and explain that you are here to talk about touching.

Good Touch

"There are all different kinds of touching—ways that people touch each other. Some of them make us feel good—like a hug [you may want to give yourself a hug at this point] and some of them make us feel bad—like a pinch [grimace].

"Everyone here knows a lot about touching.

"What are some kinds of good touch? Who can give me an example?" *Likely responses include:*

- ☐ hugs from mom and dad
- ☐ holding hands
- ☐ a kiss
- ☐ a pat on the back
- ☐ shaking hands
- ☐ "love pats"

Be sure to provide encouragement and praise their answers.

Bad Touch

"Now let's talk about bad touch. What are some examples of touching that make us feel bad?

- ☐ kicking
- ☐ pinching
- ☐ hitting
- ☐ getting a spanking
- ☐ knuckle rubs

This list can go on forever and usually needs to be cut short.

"Everyone here knows exactly what I'm talking about. You all know what good touch is and what bad touch is."

Confusing Touch

"Now we're going to talk about another kind of touch. Can anyone think of a time when the good touch we talked about didn't feel good? The touching is the same but it makes you feel different. Here's an example. Have you ever had someone tickle you and at first it was fun and felt good but then they wouldn't stop? Do you remember how you felt?"

- ☐ mad
- ☐ it hurt

"Here's another example of good touch that doesn't feel good. What if someone you didn't know very well or someone you didn't like gave you a big hug? How would you feel?

- ☐ yucky

With these examples, the kids will catch on to what you are saying and will probably have examples of their own.

"I want to tell you a story about a little girl and I want you to think about what this little girl could do."

Suzie and the Spider

"Suzie was a little girl who was about six-years old* who liked to play in her front yard. One day she was playing by herself on the lawn and Mr. Jones, a nice neighbor, came walking by.

"Mr. Jones stopped to talk to Suzie and while they were talking he said, "Suzie, there's a spider on the front of your shirt." Suzie got upset because she was afraid of spiders and Mr. Jones said, "Hold still and I'll brush it off for you."

"While he was brushing the spider off, Suzie looked down and saw that there wasn't a spider there at all. But Mr. Jones kept touching her on the chest and pretending to brush the spider off."

*Should be close to the age of the children.

"How do you think Suzie felt?*"

- ☐ scared
- ☐ mad
- ☐ sad
- ☐ yucky

"What could Suzie do?"

- ☐ ask/tell Mr. Jones not to touch her
- ☐ go inside/run away
- ☐ hit Mr. Jones
- ☐ try to trick him
- ☐ say no

Other questions are also possible; Should Suzie tell someone? Who could she tell? Had Suzie done anything wrong?

"What Suzie did was to say to Mr. Jones, "I don't want to talk to you anymore." Then she ran into the house and told her mom what had happened. Her mom said, "Suzie, I'm really glad you told me." Then her mom talked to Mr. Jones and told him not to do that again."

Tricking

"What Mr. Jones did wasn't fair. He tricked Suzie and told her she had a spider on her shirt when there wasn't one there at all. It isn't fair for someone to trick you so that they can touch parts of your body. It made Suzie feel scared and mad and sad. He shouldn't have done that."

*Sometimes someone will respond with "happy" as a reaction to the attention, not the being tricked.

Uh-oh Feelings

"Sometimes things happen to us and we don't know exactly what's going on. Sometimes we get a funny feeling that can help us figure it out. I call it an 'uh-oh' feeling. Some of you have probably had a time when you've had a feeling, maybe in your stomach or up your spine or goose-bumps, that something wasn't right."

Check to see if they understand and have had this experience.

If they are not catching on, provide some examples.

"This 'uh-oh' feeling is sort of like RADAR—it can tell you when something might be wrong, even if you're not exactly sure of what's happening. If you think something is wrong, then you're right.

"Even if you're not sure that anything is wrong, if you feel funny about it, tell someone. Just like Suzie—she told her mom.

"Here's another story about tricking and about 'uh-oh' feelings."

Jane and Uncle Joe

"Jane was a girl six-years-old* who had an Uncle Joe who she liked a lot. He would come to visit and take her out for ice cream.

"One day Uncle Joe came to visit and asked Jane if she wanted to go to Baskin-Robbins to get an ice cream cone. Jane wanted some ice cream and her mom said it was okay—so she and Uncle Joe got in the car to go to the store.

"As they were driving to the store, Uncle Joe put his hand on Jane's thigh [this may not be a familiar word, so pat your own thigh to demonstrate] and then he started to put his hand between Jane's legs. He told her he would buy her the biggest ice cream cone if she wouldn't tell anyone."

*Should be close to the age of the children.

"How do you think Jane felt?"

- ☐ scared
- ☐ sad
- ☐ mixed up

"What could Jane do?"

- ☐ say no
- ☐ move away
- ☐ get in the back seat

"What Jane did was say, "I don't want an ice cream cone." (even though she really did) And then she said, "I want to go home." When she got home she told her mom what happened. Her mom said, "Jane, I'm really glad you told me and I will talk to Uncle Joe." Then she gave Jane a hug."

Uh-oh Feelings

"Remember the 'uh-oh' feeling we talked about? When Uncle Joe put his hand on Jane's leg and started to put his hand between her legs she got a funny feeling, an 'uh-oh' kind of feeling. And she knew Uncle Joe shouldn't be doing that."

Who Could You Tell

"And he shouldn't have told her not to tell. Jane knew it was a good idea to tell someone, even though he told her not to.

"If you had a problem like Jane's or like Suzie's, if something like that happened to you, who could you tell about it?"

- ☐ mom/dad
- ☐ sister/brother
- ☐ neighbors
- ☐ grandmother/grandfather/aunt/uncle
- ☐ teacher/principal
- ☐ friends

"It's important to tell someone. If that person doesn't listen or if they don't understand or they don't believe you, then tell someone else, and keep telling until someone listens."

Wrap-up—Review

"Let's remember what we talked about. First we talked about touching—about good touches like hugs and bad touches like pinches.

"Then we talked about touches that are mixed up—touching that is supposed to be good but that makes you feel bad instead—like being tickled when you don't want to be tickled anymore. Or being hugged by somebody you don't like.

"And 'uh-oh' feelings. Remember, that's a funny feeling you get sometimes when something is wrong or when you're not sure what is going on:

- ☐ like when someone tricks you
- ☐ or you don't want to be touched
- ☐ or when you're mixed up or scared about the touching

"Remember, it's not fair for someone to trick you so that they can touch you.

"If that happens to you—if someone touches you in a way that makes you feel funny—be sure to tell someone."

Thank you.

"You were good listeners and you had good ideas. Thank you."

SECOND AND THIRD GRADERS

In General

For children of this age, a half-hour presentation is easily managed. They are much more talkative in the group (and better at listening to each other) and are eager to ask and answer questions. A speaker is likely to encounter a sea of raised hands and/or a chorus of voices.

Giggling and 'silly' answers (e.g., "I'll tell Superman.") may occur but can usually be channeled by a direct acknowledgement of the tension and/or embarassment.

Some of their responses may not seem to be related to what you are saying. They are, but it may take you a minute to see the connection. Try to find the relevant point, acknowledge it and move along (e.g., "Yes, that's another kind of tricking.")

If the children are free to move you will find them moving closer and closer to you as the discussion goes on.

Children this age are beginning to see peers as important but family is still primary.

'Tattling' is a concern and they are quick to see unfairness. They will usually point out that Mr. Jones (in the first story) *lied* to Suzie.

Some children have names for all parts of their bodies, but most do not have a good working vocabulary for 'private parts.' They have some information about sexuality and may show embarrassment during the stories.

About Sexual Assault

Children this age may have heard the word 'rape' but associate it more with kidnapping or robbery or murder (e.g., being cut into pieces). They most certainly have heard about dangerous strangers and believe firmly every horror story that has come their way. It may be difficult to move them away from ideas which are deeply imbedded, although they find the more accurate information reassuring.

The children will grasp the concept of 'confusing touch' much more readily and will have numerous examples of their own.

Although they are familiar with being bullied by older kids and talk about some of their experiences, they still assume that anyone they know is automatically a 'good' person (e.g., "My babysitter would never do that.")

Children may share past experiences. Be sure to be attentive and to praise them for whatever they did to resolve the situation.*

*See: "If a Child Discloses an Assault."

SECOND AND THIRD GRADERS

Outline of Presentation

Introduction
Good touch
Bad touch
Confusing touch
  Story—*Suzie and the Spider*
    Points to emphasize
      Tricking
      'Uh-oh' feelings
  Story—*Jane and Uncle Joe*
    Points to emphasize
      'Uh-oh' feelings
      Who could you tell?

Same as K-1 Presentation with more examples and sharing from the children. (See pages 1–11)

  Story—*Patti and Steve in the Park*
    Points to emphasize
      It's a good idea to tell someone.
      It's not your fault.

'What ifs'

Wrap-up/review
  Good touch/bad touch/confusing touch
  'Uh-oh' feeling
  Not fair for someone to trick you
  Tell someone

Same as K-1 Presentation (See page 12)

  It's not your fault.

Thank you.

PRESENTATION TO SECOND AND THIRD GRADERS

The presentation is the same as that used for kindergartners and first graders, with an additional story "Patti and Steve in the Park," an additional concept of 'It's not your fault,' and some 'what ifs' to extend the presentation.

The sample presentation for kindergartners and first graders can be used for second and third graders with some additions:

- Add the story of "Patti and Steve in the Park," after the discussion of the story "Jane and Uncle Joe."

- Then use some of the 'what ifs' to help practice problem-solving before the wrap-up and review.

- Add the concept, "It's not your fault" to the end of the review:

  "And remember, if something like this happens to you, it's not your fault."

"This is the story about a brother and sister. I'd like you to think about how you would feel if you were Patti or Steve."

Patti and Steve in the Park

"Patti and Steve were brother and sister. Patti was eight and Steve was six.* They lived in a house right next to a park and really liked to play there when they got home from school. They had a rule in their house, though. The rule was that Patti and Steve could go play in the park *only* if someone else was at home. So, if they got home from school and no one else was home they had to wait until someone came home before they went out to the park to play.

"One day they got home and no one else was there, but they decided to go out to the park anyway.

"So they went to the park and were having a good time, when some kids from the junior high came up to them and started talking. As they were talking, one of the older kids said, "Hey, do you two want to make some money?" Patti and Steve said, "Sure." They wanted some money. So the older kid said, "Well, we'll give you both $5.00 if you pull your pants down for us right now."

*Should be close to the age of the children.

"How do you think Patti and Steve felt?"

- ☐ scared
- ☐ they didn't know what to do

Discussion

"What could Patti and Steve do?"

- ☐ run away
- ☐ say no
- ☐ ignore the older kids—keep on playing
- ☐ run home
- ☐ do it [someone inevitably suggests this]

"What Patti and Steve did was to say to the older kids, "We don't want the money" (even though they did.) And they went straight home.

"There was no one home when they got there and Patti and Steve tried to decide if they should tell."

Ask who thinks Patti and Steve will tell someone and who thinks they won't tell anyone.

"Why wouldn't they tell someone?"

- ☐ they broke a rule
- ☐ they would get into trouble

"Why would they tell someone?"

- ☐ you should always tell the truth

"At first Patti and Steve decided not to tell because they were afraid they would get in trouble. But then they got so nervous that someone would find out that they told their mom.

"What do you think their mom said? What did she do?"

- ☐ she got mad
- ☐ she scolded them
- ☐ I don't know

"First Patti's and Steve's mom looked like she was going to get mad, but then she told them that they did exactly the right thing by saying, "We don't want the money," and coming straight home. Then she said, "I'm glad you told me." And gave each of them a big hug.

"Patti and Steve were still a little worried so their mom sat down with them to talk. She told them that even though they broke the rules by going to the park, that what the older kids did wasn't their fault. She said it wasn't fair for the older kids to do that to them."

'What ifs' for Kindergartners to Third Graders

"What if you were walking down the street and someone asked you to come inside their house to see the new kittens?

"Suppose you thought you knew the person but you weren't sure?" [Sometimes younger children have a hard time figuring out whether or not they know someone—especially if the adult treats them in a familiar way.]

"What if your babysitter asked you to take your clothes off (and it wasn't bedtime or time to take a bath or change your clothes)?

"What if your babysitter said you could stay up and watch T.V. if you took your clothes off?

"What if you were playing somewhere you weren't supposed to be and a man came along and did something that really bothered you a lot?"

Some questions to guide the 'what ifs.'

- ☐ What would you do?
- ☐ Would you tell anyone?
- ☐ Who would you tell?
- ☐ Did you do anything wrong?
- ☐ Was it your fault?

FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS

In General

There will be an enormous difference between these grades and the first four (K-3). Many children will seem a lot older to you (and to themselves); most do not consider themselves in the same range as the K-3 students. In individual classes you will see a wide range in maturity, sophistication and experiences. It's best to aim for the middle.

By this age (9-12) there is developing interest in the opposite sex and a great awareness of differences. There may have been some sex education in school, some students may know a lot about sexuality, others very little. There is also a fair amount of embarrassment about the subject—giggling and shuffling around are not uncommon. This does not mean they are disinterested.

Male and female roles are often quite clear—with boys talking in terms of violence/power and girls being manipulative and 'nice.'

Solutions to 'what ifs' are often unrealistic and strongly sex-role based. For example, boys will volunteer that they would shoot an offender. At this age, there is not yet recognition and acknowledgement of what their skills really are.

Peers are important; the discussion of whether or not to tell anyone makes it clear just how important.

About Sexual Assault

All have heard the word rape, but may not be clear about its meaning. They know all about the 'dangerous stranger,' but also have had experiences with acquaintences. There is a willingness to talk about experiences—especially obscene phone calls, being exposed to, etc. Children who have been victimized will probably be very obvious with their questions. Many will know someone who has been assaulted and may want to talk about it.*

This age group, in particular, is interested in talking afterwards about their concerns. They usually have a good understanding of tricking, force and blaming. They are sensitive to peer pressure and the consequences of breaking rules. While there may be some embarrassment, they are interested in talking about this subject and are very responsive to being treated with respect.

*See "If a Child Discloses an Assault."

FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS

Outline of Presentation

Introduction
Good touch
Bad touch
Confusing touch
  Story—*Wrestling*
    Point to emphasize
      Your body belongs to you
  Story—*Patti and Steve in the Park*
    Points to emphasize
      It's a good idea to tell someone
      It's not your fault
  Story—*Uncle Pete*
    Points to emphasize
      'Uh-oh' feelings
      Your body belongs to you
Show film—"Who Do You Tell"
Discussion
Wrap-up/review
    Good touch/bad touch/confusing touch
    Your body belongs to you
    It's a good idea to tell someone
    It's not your fault
Thank you

PRESENTATION TO FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS

Introduction

Introduce yourself as being from your agency and your role in helping kids. Explain that you are here to talk about touching—especially touching that might be confusing or upsetting.

Good touch

"First we are going to talk about good touch—the kind that makes you feel good inside.

"What are some kinds of good touch?"

- ☐ hugs
- ☐ handshakes
- ☐ pat on the back
- ☐ kiss
- ☐ holding hands
- ☐ having your hair brushed
- ☐ sitting close to someone you like

Provide encouragement and point out how most of the touches we get are ones that make us feel good.

Bad touch

"Now let's talk about bad touch. What are some kinds of touching that make us feel bad?

- ☐ being tickled too hard
- ☐ getting stepped on
- ☐ pinched

Confusing touch

"Try to think of a situation where the good kind of touch doesn't feel good."

- ☐ when someone hugs you so hard it hurts
- ☐ if someone is nice to you and you don't think they mean it
- ☐ when you're in a bad mood and you don't want to be touched

Keep this discussion going for a few minutes until they seem to be 'tuned-in' to the subject.

Some leading questions:

"How would you feel if someone you didn't like hugged you?"

- ☐ mad
- ☐ embarrassed
- ☐ shocked
- ☐ surprised
- ☐ gross!

"How would you feel if someone was touching you and they wouldn't stop?"

- ☐ mad
- ☐ I'd hit them

[a lot of "I wouldn't know what to do" looks]

"That's what we're going to talk about today—those kinds of touches that make us feel mixed up or funny—touches where we don't know what to do.

"Here's a story about something that happens. It's not a story about anybody you know. I want you to think about how this girl felt and what she could do."

Wrestling

"Sharon was ten- or eleven-years old* and she had a brother Peter who was in high school. Peter and his friends liked to wrestle in the house.

"Sharon liked to be around Peter and his friends and sometimes she liked to wrestle with them.

"One day when she was wrestling with one of Peter's friends, he tried to put his hand up her skirt."

*Should be close to the age of the children.

"How did Sharon feel?"

- ☐ surprised
- ☐ mad
- ☐ sad (because she liked these boys and one of them did something like this)
- ☐ embarrassed
- ☐ weird
- ☐ upset

"What could she do?"

- ☐ scream/yell
- ☐ leave the room/tell them to leave
- ☐ avoid them
- ☐ tell brother and mother
- ☐ hit him or his hand

"What she did was feel a lot of the feelings people mentioned [go over them again]. She got up and told the guys, "This isn't fun anymore." Then she left and went to another room to figure out what to do.

"She still felt upset so she decided to tell her mother. Her mom was glad that Sharon told her and said that what happened wasn't fair and that she would talk with the boys."

Your body belongs to you

"Remember, your body is yours. It's not fair for anyone to touch you in a way that you don't want to be touched. It's especially unfair for someone who is older or bigger or stronger to do that. It is not fair for anyone even when it's someone you know and like real well.

"Here's a story about two kids who had something scary happen to them. I want you to think about what they could do."

Patti and Steve in the Park

"Patti and Steve were brother and sister. Patti was eleven and Steve was nine.* They lived in a house right next to a park and really liked to play there when they got home from school. They had a rule in their house, though. The rule was that Patti and Steve could go play in the park *only* if someone else was at home. So, if they got home from school and no one else was home they had to wait until someone came home before they went out to the park to play.

"One day they got home and no one else was there, but they decided to go out to the park anyway.

"So they went to the park and were having a good time, when some kids from the junior high came up to them and started talking. As they were talking, one of the older kids said, "Hey, do you two want to make some money?" Patti and Steve said, "Sure." They want some money. So the older kid said, "Well, we'll give you both $5.00 if you pull your pants down for us right now."

*Should be close to the age of the children.

"How do you think Patti and Steve felt?"

- ☐ scared
- ☐ embarrassed
- ☐ surprised

"What could they do?"

- ☐ say no
- ☐ ignore them
- ☐ walk or run home
- ☐ try to trick them and get the money
- ☐ get help from someone in the park

"What Patti and Steve did was say, "No." and then they headed right home."

It's a good idea to tell someone.
"How many think they told their parents? Why?

- ☐ important to tell
- ☐ had to get it off their chest

"How many think they didn't tell? Why?"

- ☐ afraid of getting in trouble because they broke the rule
- ☐ afraid of getting in trouble because of what happened
- ☐ embarrassed
- ☐ retaliation

"If they did what the boys said—if they pulled their pants down—would they tell?"

(probably not)

"If the older boys were friends of theirs would they tell?"

- ☐ might not be friends anymore
- ☐ probably would protect friends

It's not your fault.

"Patti and Steve at first decided not to tell, then got very nervous about people finding out and they finally told.

"What their parents said was:"

- ☐ you did break the rules but what the older kids did was not your fault.
- ☐ we're glad you kids told

"What are some of the other reasons kids might not tell?"

- ☐ fear of other people/kids finding out
- ☐ fear no one will believe you
- ☐ retaliation
- ☐ might get in trouble
- ☐ people will think you're just trying to get attention

"Did Patti and Steve do anything wrong?"

Be sure to help them sort this out.

"Sometimes it's awfully hard to tell someone. But it's important to tell."

"Who could you tell?"

- ☐ family
- ☐ neighbors
- ☐ relatives
- ☐ friends
- ☐ teachers
- ☐ principal
- ☐ office staff
- ☐ janitor
- ☐ librarian
- ☐ counselor
- ☐ police
- ☐ rape relief

"Be sure to tell someone. If they don't help, keep telling until someone does. Sometimes adults are not sure what to do, so they might not help. It's important to keep telling."

"Here's another story."

Uncle Pete

"Mary was a girl who liked to be tickled. She had an Uncle Pete who liked to tickle her. They had a pretty good time together.

"One day, when Uncle Pete was tickling Mary, she started to feel funny. At first she really liked the tickling but then she wanted to stop. But Uncle Pete wouldn't stop. He kept tickling even though she told him not to and that she really meant it. He was tickling her on top of her clothes and under her clothes and she didn't like it. And she felt funny."

As with the previous story, ask each discussion question and allow time for individual youngsters to respond.

"How do you think Mary felt?"

"What could she do?"

Be sure to reinforce appropriate solutions.

"Should she tell someone?"

"Who could she tell?"

'Uh-oh' feelings

"Have any of you ever had a feeling that something might be strange or weird or not right, even though you weren't sure what it was?

"Sometimes things happen to us and we don't know exactly what's going on. Sometimes we get a funny feeling that can help us figure it out. That's what happened to Mary. Uncle Pete kept right on touching her after she told him to stop. She got a funny feeling, a feeling that something was wrong. Some of you have probably had a time when you've had a feeling, maybe in your stomach or up your spine or goose-bumps, that something wasn't right."

Most will recognize what you are talking about and will probably have examples.

"This 'uh-oh' feeling is sometimes called intuition. It's a very important feeling, like RADAR. It says, "pay attention, something is wrong here."

"If you have this feeling—even if your're not exactly sure of what's happening—be sure to pay attention and remember to tell someone."

Your body belongs to you:

"It's not fair for people to trick you so that they can touch you.

"If you say "no" or "stop" people should listen to what you say. Because your whole body is yours and people don't have a right to touch you in ways you don't like or in ways that make you feel funny.

"It's not okay for people to do that even if they're older kids or adults."

It's not your fault:

"Was what happened Mary's fault?"

"Did Mary do anything wrong?"

Be sure to help them sort this out. Some of their concerns will be:

- ☐ Mary was the one who started it.
- ☐ At first Mary liked the tickling.
- ☐ Uncle Pete is a grown up and grown ups are always right.

"If someone touches you in a way you don't like, it's not your fault. It's not okay for anyone to do that, even if they're older kids or adults."

"Now we're going to look at a movie called "Who Do You Tell?" It shows some problems that people your age could have and tries to help you figure out who to tell."

Show Movie: "Who Do You Tell" —11 minutes.

Discussion

As you re-cap the film, the children may have 'what ifs' of their own to add to those shown in the film, e.g.:

- ☐ What if you're alone in the house and scared?
- ☐ What if someone calls on the phone and says bad things?

"Who could *you* tell if you had a problem?

- ☐ mom/dad
- ☐ grandma/aunt/uncle
- ☐ teacher/principal

"What if they don't listen? Or didn't believe you? Who else could you tell?"

Wrap-up/Review

"Let's go over what we talked about. First, we talked about touching—about good touches like hugs and bad touches like pinches.

"Then we talked about touches that are confusing—touching that is supposed to be good but that makes you feel bad instead—like being tickled when you don't want to be tickled anymore. Or being hugged by someone you don't like.

"Then we talked about wrestling and about Patti and Steve in the park and about Uncle Pete.

"There are three things I'd like you to remember about these stories:

- ☐ "Your body belongs to you—it's not fair for anyone to touch you in a way that you don't want to be touched.
- ☐ "It's a good idea to tell someone. If that person doesn't help you, tell someone else—and keep telling until someone helps you; and, most important:
- ☐ "It's not your fault."

Thank you.

"Thank you for talking to me today. You had good ideas."

SIXTH GRADERS

In General

This is a year of transition. In most school systems, the sixth graders are the oldest group in the school. They are on top of their small world and enjoy being recognized as different and more grown up.

If the group is a mature one, or has already had the basic prevention information (or has heard all about it from the younger children!), a more sophisticated approach may be useful.

There is both interest in, and antagonism toward, the opposite sex. They are unsure what to expect from each other and how to behave toward one another.

About Sexual Assault

Youngsters of this age have a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong. They probably understand that forced sexual contact is wrong, but do not yet know that it is a crime. They need help in recognizing troublesome situations and in figuring out what to do. Myths about offenders and victims are firmly entrenched at this age level. The 'how to help a friend' information is valuable as a gentle reminder that sexual assault could happen to someone they know—or to them. Incest may be disclosed as young people approach their teen years. "It's not your fault" still needs to be emphasized.

SIXTH GRADERS

Outline of Presentation

Introduction

Review: "What We Tell the Younger Kids"

- Good touch/bad touch/confusing touch
- Your body belongs to you
- Tell someone
- It's not your fault

Show film—"No More Secrets"

Discussion

Questions

Points to emphasize

- Someone you know (or you) could have a problem like this
- Even peole who seem nice can do things that are wrong
- How to help a friend
  - Really listen.
  - Believe them.
  - Tell them, "It's not your fault."
  - Tell someone who can help.

Wrap-up/Review

Thank you

Presentation To Sixth Graders

Introduction

Introduce yourself as being from your agency and your role in working with children. Explain that you're here to talk about sexual assault. Let them know that you know that they already have heard some things about sexual assault and that you are here to answer questions. You can also acknowledge at this point—or at the first giggle—that it's a hard subject to talk about.

Review: What We Tell the Younger Kids

"First we're going to do a little review and go over the things we tell the younger kids. If you were here last year, you probably remember this.

"With the younger kids, we talk about touching—good touch, the kind that makes you feel good inside; bad touch—the kind of touching that makes you feel bad; and confusing touch—the kind of touching that's confusing or upsetting.

Ask who remembers hearing about good, bad and confusing touch to give yourself a better sense of the group. If they already have the information, skip the review and go right to the movie.

"Remember, good touch is the kind that makes you feel good inside.

"What are some kinds of good touch?"

- ☐ hugs
- ☐ handshakes
- ☐ pat on the back
- ☐ sitting close to someone you like

Provide encouragement and point out that most of the touches we get are one that make us feel good.

"What about bad touch? What are some kinds of touching that make us feel bad?"

- ☐ being tickled too hard
- ☐ getting stepped on
- ☐ pinched
- ☐ hit

"All of those are kinds of touches that make us feel bad."

"Now let's think about confusing touch. Try to think of a situation where the good kind of touch doesn't feel good."

- ☐ when someone hugs you so hard it hurts
- ☐ if someone is nice to you and you don't think they mean it
- ☐ when you're in a bad mood and you don't want to be touched

The responses that emerge will give you a good idea of the depth of understanding in the group.

Sometimes the responses are very perceptive:

- ☐ when the person is only doing it for themselves
- ☐ when someone touches you on a private part of your body
- ☐ when the person won't stop when you tell them to
- ☐ when first it feels good and then it doesn't, but they keep doing it anyway

"That's what we're going to talk about today: touches that make us feel mixed up or funny—touches where we don't know what to do."

"There are three things to remember if someone touches you like this:

- ☐ It is your body.
- ☐ It's a good idea to tell someone.
- ☐ It's not your fault."

"We have a movie today about four friends—two girls and two boys. Some of them have a problem with people touching them."

Show film "No More Secrets" — 13 minutes.

Discussion

Use the same format used with the 'what if' and the stories to lead a discussion of each of the three incidents in the film.

"How did s/he feel?"

"What did s/he decide to do?"

"Did s/he do anything wrong?"

Questions

Ask if there are questions. See pages 43–46 for questions that may come up.

Points to Emphasize

"Sometimes we think that things like this only happen to other people or that they could never happen to someone we know. Or we think that people who do this are creepy strangers."

"What really happens is what happened in this movie.

- ☐ Regular, ordinary people have things like this happen to them—someone you know (or you) could have a problem like this.
- ☐ The people who do these things are not usually creepy strangers—even people we know, people who seem nice, can do things that are wrong.

"That's why we all need to know how to help a friend."

"The people in the movie were all good friends. One of the things that friends do is help each other. What did they do to help each other?"

- ☐ They didn't laugh.
- ☐ They didn't make faces.
- ☐ They didn't call her/him a liar.
- ☐ They helped her/him figure out what to do.

Provide encouragement to their responses.

"If something like this happened to someone you know—to a friend of yours—you could do the same kinds of things to help your friend. You could:"

- ☐ really listen
- ☐ believe them
- ☐ tell them "It's not your fault"
- ☐ help them figure out who to tell

Wrap up/Review

Go over the main points of the discussion including:

- ☐ It's not your fault
- ☐ Someone you know (or you) could have a problem like this
- ☐ Even people who seem nice can do things that are wrong
- ☐ Tell someone who can help

Thank you

"Thank you for talking with me today. I had a good time and I hope you did too—and that you learned something new. It was nice to be here."

Questions That Come Up From Fourth to Sixth Graders — and Some Possible Answers

When a question is asked, it is usually a good idea to turn it back to the group before answering yourself, so that you can get an idea of what they already know or have misconceptions about and so you can build on their answer.

Q. Why do people do this?

Q. What kind of person would do these things to kids?

A. Some people think they need to be in charge of other people and this is one way they have of bullying other people.

A. Some people have problems and they hurt other people. They don't know that there are other ways of solving problems.

[You will probably have heard from the children that people who do this are mean, weird, crazy, etc.]

A. Sometimes even nice people do things that are wrong or that hurt other people.

Q. Are these stories true?

A. These are the kinds of things that happen to kids, but the Patti and Steve and Sharon in the stories are not real kids that I know or you know.

Q. Has this ever happened to you?

Answer as you think best. Sometimes you can use a situation that you remember facing as a child as an example of a point you are trying to get across, e.g., "I remember a neighbor who always wanted me to sit on his lap. It made me feel funny but I did it anyway because I was scared to say no. What could you do if someone did that to you?"

Q. Is this child abuse?

[Many of the kids have heard the term 'child abuse' and can make the connection.]

A. Yes. There are different kinds of child abuse and this in one of them. If an adult hurts a child, for example, punches or hits a child, it's abuse. And if an adult touches a child in a sexual way or makes the child touch them that's abuse too.

Q. Why do girls have more problems?

A. Some people think its okay to do this to girls but not to boys. It's not.

A. Some people think girls like to be grabbed, kissed, etc. They don't.

A. Some people think girls are not as strong as boys and so are easier to pick on. That's not true.

Q. What is a child molester?

A. Someone who does some of the things we've been talking about. He may try to get kids to take their clothes off or take his clothes off in front of kids.

A. He might try to touch kids in ways that make them uncomfortable. He may try to touch parts of kids bodies that are private of sexual—like between your legs, or on your chest if you're a girl.

A. He might want kids to touch him.

Q. What's an exposer/flasher?

A. Someone who pulls his pants down and wants/expects people to get scared or upset.

Q. What's rape?

The idea here, as with other responses, is to answer as honestly as possible without providing information which could be overwhelming. You can begin with a general statement, for example:

A. Rape is when someone who is older or bigger or stronger touches you in certain ways—like between your legs, on your genitals.

You can go on the affirm or clarify their responses, for example:

A. No, it's not the same as having sex, because if it's rape, someone is forcing you or tricking you into doing something you don't want to do.

A. Robbery is when someone takes something that belongs to you.

Q. If a man does this to you, and you're a boy, are you queer?

[The idea here is to be aware of the importance of concerns around sexual identity and also to avoid reinforcing already-present homophobia.]

A. I'm going to use the word 'gay' because 'queer' is a word that hurts some people.

[Ask if anyone knows what gay means—i.e., a man who prefers other men, instead of women.]

A. There are two things to remember when a man or an older boy does something like this to a boy. One is that it doesn't make the boy that it happened to into a gay person. Whether or not you're gay is something that's decided when you're very little. The other thing to remember is that the man who did this is probably not gay—just a man who takes advantage of boys.

IF A CHILD DISCLOSES AN ASSAULT

One of the biggest difficulties that speakers face is the large number of victimized children. This shows up in several ways:

- Children who have been victimized in the past, but who are not in any danger now.
- Children who know someone who has been victimized.
- Children who are currently being victimized.

Because the presentation may involve a lot of discussion of feelings and specific problem situations, it is very likely that someone will start talking about an experience. It is helpful if you can determine which of the above categories the child will come under.

Past Victimization

This is fairly common. The child will usually talk about an experience along the lines of an obscene phone call, being followed, being bullied.

It is important to:

- Listen.
- Respond positively to what the child is saying and to what s/he did.
- Bring the discussion back to the whole group as soon as possible.
- Reinforce whatever the child did to end the situation.
- Thank him/her for sharing the experience.

Knowledge of Another's Vicitimization

Many children know someone who was victimized and are often quite eager to tell the class. Determine as quickly as possible whether the victimized child is in the same school as you (or worse

yet, the same class). It is very important to protect the victim's privacy. You may need to stop the story-teller in mid-stream, saying, for example, "When something like this happens, it's best if the people themselves decide who they want to tell." The older the class, the less likely the children are to tell about another's victimization, but it's something to watch for.

Current Victimization

This is by far the most difficult situation for you as the speaker to deal with. As a rule, the child will not come right out with a statement about what is happening to him/her, but will give indications such as:

- Being very fidgety, nervous, agitated.
- Developing a headache, getting sick during the presentation.

The non-verbal cues may be indicative of a number of problems, but are worth checking out.

The child may also say something or ask a question like:

> If your cousin forces you, is it still rape?
>
> My babysitter asked me to play strip-poker.
>
> My mom told me not to tell what my grandfater does.

Clearly the above examples are ones that should be investigated. If you suspect that a child is currently in danger, talk to the teacher and make sure that an *understanding* adult will talk with the child *OR* make yourself available after the presentation.

This latter suggestion works well with third graders and older. A statement like, "I'll be in this classroom during recess if anyone wants to talk," (or out on the playground) will provide a situation for a child to approach you (or possibly vice versa).

In any case, if you suspect a child is in danger, a report needs to be made to Children's Protective Services. If the child is not in danger, but is in need of advocacy/counseling handle that the way you would any other case.

Talking to Parents

INTRODUCTION

Most of the parent groups we have spoken with have been small (12-25 people) and informal. The setting is often a relaxed one—someone's living room, a pre-school playroom. Most often, all of the people present are parents. In some cases they already know one another and may be familiar with one another's views on child-rearing. Frequently the groups are all women.

The most frequent source of parent presentations have been:

- Church groups
- Women's clubs and sororities
- P.T.S.A.'s
- Preschool cooperatives
- Babysitting cooperatives
- Parenting classes
- Neighborhood "coffees"

The groups tend to be more personal, more intimate and more intense than other presentations. Often people will share personal experiences.

The outline and speaking notes we have included are one of many possibile ways to organize the material. In reality, the presentation will be less structured and will be more of an open exchange. The speaker will need to respond to concerns as they arise, making sure that key points are addressed along the way.

Some groups will start and end with basic information. Other groups will be familiar and comfortable with the basic information and will spend most of the time on figuring out what to say and how to say it.

Some Things to Keep in Mind

The subject of sexual assault is a scary one.

- We know from Kinsey and other more recent research that it is safe to assume that one out of four females in this country were sexually assaulted as children. The women in the audience will be bringing their own childhood experiences.

- The threat of rape is ever present for women. The fear of having a child victimized is at least as frightening.

- Talking about sexual assault violates basic taboos. It isn't 'nice' and may even be viewed as much worse. There is also a sense that talking about such a forbidden subject brings consequences—that just as closing one's eyes or turning a deaf ear assures that it only happens to other people, talking about it or thinking about it makes it more likely to happen.

- Acknowledging the reality of sexual assaults against children, 'naming,' 'telling it like it is'—all are a profound threat to the status quo.

If you represent a rape crisis center, remember that the center itself may be threatening to people. The audience may be somewhat wary initially, or there may be some concern about having to face a speaker who acknowledges her own victimization.

Despite all of the progress we have made, the level of misinformation around sexual assault of children remains high. Don't make any assumptions about what people know.

All of us who make presentations have become familiar and somewhat accustomed to the information we are trying to convey. It is easy to forget how shocking the facts really are and how overwhelmed we originally felt. Remember to go slowly and give people time to absorb the information. Listen carefully to questions and concerns that are expressed.

In Preparing

There is far too much material to be covered in one night. Each speaker will need to decide for her/himself which are the critical points to be covered. These will be different for different groups and for individual speakers. It helps to have an overview or framework and goals for the evening.

Three Goals:

Provide New Information

Because of varying cultural backgrounds people will come to the presentation with many differing values on the topic of sexual assault of children and also about many topics which are closely related, for example: sex education—at home and in the schools, sex play among children, discipline and authority in the family, etc.

The speaker will need to examine her/his values (and those of the program s/he represents) and sort out what information is critical to convey and what is not.

It is important not to be dogmatic about issues that are not crucial to the topic, but rather to be open to the different ways that parents can convey the prevention information to their children and not be in conflict with other values they hold.

A bit of humility helps too. The information on prevention is still new and we are all finding out way. We are there to share our experiences. We do not have all the answers; we do have ideas and information.

Stimulate Thinking

With any luck, the new information will stimulate people's thinking. One of the goals of the evening is to open doors that have long been closed. Providing encouragement and moral support is important in helping people get past their fears and their biases. With encouragement, people will think through their values about protecting their children from sexual assault and will act on those values.

Work Toward Change

It is important to hold out hope for poeple that prevention can work, that parents don't have to be passive and helpless and that they don't need to raise another generation of victimized children.

Provide encouragement that the direct approach can work, that children can handle the information and can protect themselves if we share what we know with them.

Share success stories.

PARENTS

Outline of Presentation

Introduction
  Self
  Agency [Who we are:
    services we provide to victims, families, friends, community; confidentiality, right to make own choices]

Talking to Parents/Children

Hesitations/Sexual Abuse is Hard to Talk About

Traditional Warnings

Reality/Definitions

Discussion

Explore What to Communicate/How to Communicate

Discussion of Related Issues

Wrap-up/Review

Presentation to Parents

Introduction

Take some time to introduce yourself and the agency you represent. It will give you a chance to become comfortable in the group and give the group a chance to look at you and get past any initial concerns they may have about you. (See: "Some things to keep in mind.")

Explain the services the agency provides and some of your values. (As a rape crisis center we use confidentiality and a victim's right to make her own choices.) This will set the tone for the discussion. People can relax knowing that it will not be a 'we/they' encounter nor will their privacy be violated.

Talking to Parents/Children

You may want to explain your involvement with children/parents and what your goals are. If you are using or have developed any particular resources/tools you might want to share them.

Be sure to get across that you believe talking to children will reduce assaults.

Emphasize wanting to hear their questions, concerns, ideas.

The presentation is based on *He Told Me Not To Tell*. Page references are included.

Hesitations—p. 4

"We all have hesitations and concerns about talking with children about sexual assault:

- ☐ afraid they'll get funny ideas about sex
- ☐ loss of innocence
- ☐ concern about fostering mistrust
- ☐ become less affectionate
- ☐ don't want to scare them

"We need to acknowledge our own fears and think them through. Often we do not speak about difficult areas because of our own concerns. For example, we may not want to talk about sexual assault because of reluctance to scare children, forgetting that they are already pretty scared by the stranger warnings.

"We know that children fill in the gaps and imagine the worst—murder, robbery, being cut in little pieces, being taken away from parents. Providing accurate information is much less scary by comparison and can actually reduce anxiety by:

- ☐ bringing the subject into the open
- ☐ clearing up misconceptions
- ☐ providing reassurance
- ☐ helping children to develop their skills"

Traditional Warnings—Intro., p. 4

"Most of us were told about strangers:

- ☐ don't talk to them
- ☐ don't take candy
- ☐ don't accept rides

"Most of us pass this on to our children.

"There are difficulties with this approach, for example:

- ☐ Often children, especially younger ones, do not understand what a stranger is.
- ☐ Few of us tell children *why* they should avoid strangers.

- ☐ We don't tell them what strangers might do. Just *watch out*.

"The results of our warnings are not what we intend.

"Children are confused and may not understand what we are talking about or what they are to do or not to do, for example:

- ☐ Should they talk to the grocery store clerk?
- ☐ What about people who seem to know you but you can't remember if you know them or not?
- ☐ Should you accept a ride home from school from your friend's parent? From a teacher?

"Children are scared. Not knowing what a stranger might do, but knowing it is too awful to talk about, children imagine the worst. What they imagine is worse than the reality they will more likely face.

"We are communicating and teaching fear through a combination of warnings, dire threats and secretiveness.

"Children are more vulnerable than they need to be. The warnings about strangers do not give them any help in dealing with the approaches they are more than likely to be confronted with."

Reality/Definitions—p.5

"What we have been taught and what we have passed on to our children is not accurate.

"Most of us are afraid of rape and imagine a stranger coming out of the blue, attacking a child, hurting her/him badly.

"These things do happen, however, they are rare.

"What is far more common, more likely to happen is what we ignore. Eighty-five percent of the children who are assaulted are taken advantage of by someone they know—usually someone they know quite well, someone they trust."

If questions have not been asked by now, this is the time to generate them.

People will need to absorb and process the information before moving on. If the group is new to the information this may be as far as you get. People may need to come to grips with the information by talking about related issues:

-What kind of person would do this?
-Does treatment work?

or about their own experiences.

Reality/Definitions—con't page 6

"Children are not usually the victims of violent, physical force. Usually the force is far more subtle, but just as effective in getting compliance. It helps to remember the power that adults have over children.

Review the usual kinds of force.

"It might not make sense that these kinds of force would work—except that children have been told so little and have no information, except from the offender."

Review "What are children up against?" p.10.

What to Communicate/How to Communicate—p. 11–15.

"The basic messages we're trying to get across to children are:

- ☐ Your body belongs to you. You can decide who touches it.
- ☐ It is a good idea to tell someone.
- ☐ It is not your fault.

"Each family will find its own ways to communicate this information.

"The first step is to develop for yourself a good working definition of sexual assault. Once you have a working definition and a commitment to incorporating this information into your other important teaching, opportunities to talk will become more apparent.

"Helping children to protect themselves is not done through a one-time lecture. Children will need on-going encouragement to trust their own feelings and to speak up for themselves."

You can ask how many people have already spoken to their child(ren) about sexual assault, what kinds of things they've tried as explanations, what has worked, what hasn't worked.

The discussion can move in the direction their questions lead—You can provide some guidelines for beginning to talk with children, for example:

- *clearing up misconceptions*
- *talking about touching*
- *giving children a good working vocabulary for parts of the body*
- *using non-verbal means of getting the basic message across*
- *encouraging children to act on their feelings of discomfort*
- *using games like 'what ifs' and stories*

Be sure to wrap up with a quick review and encouragement regarding children's abilities to protect themselves, given good information and support.

Appendices

WORKING WITH PARENTS OF CHILD VICTIMS

Helping parents to help their sexually assaulted child requires many of the same skills rape crisis workers have already developed in working directly with adult victims. The peer advocate/counselor for a parent of a sexually victimized child needs good solid information and peer counseling skills. S/he also needs to have an opportunity to examine her/his own attitude about child sexual assault. Just as we cannot help adult victims until we have dealt with our own biases (and fears) we cannot help children without a similar look at our own beliefs.

The assumptions underlying work with adult victims are just as important in working successfully with parents of child victims: neither the child nor the (non-offending) parent are to blame for the assault; an assault does not necessarily indicate a failure in parenting or a lack in the child; and responsibility for the assault lies with the offender.

Despite the fact that we know that one out of four female children are assaulted, we still believe that an assault on a child represents a failure in parenting. Although none of us blame an adult victim, we somehow believe that because the victim is a child, the situation is different and that there must be some fault with the parent. We cannot help parents help children unless we are clear ourselves that the blame lies with the offender.

Our experience has been that if parents have adequate support and information to handle the crisis they are in a good position to help the child. They know the child best; they have the child's trust; they are there to respond to concerns as they arise.

Some of the steps providing that support are:

1. Express Faith in the Parent's Ability

A sexual assault is a crisis for the whole family. Parents often blame themselves for what happened. When a sexual assault is seen as a

failure in parenting, parents will doubt themselves and lose confidence in themselves as capable parents. It helps to remind parents that they *do* know what to say and do. Rather than 'giving' answers, you can encourage parents to practice with you to work out responses they are comfortable with. Families are all different—each has its own strengths.

2. Help Sort and Clarify

The shock of the crisis hits parents too. There may be difficulty in thinking clearly and in absorbing new information. You can help a parent sort things out: what must be done immediately; what can wait until tomorrow; which problems are high priority; and which things other people can tend to.

3. Point Out Positive Steps Already Taken

A first step in restoring confidence can be recognizing the positive steps already taken. For example:

If a child has told what happened, you can let the parent know how seldom children are able to and what that says about the child's trust in the parent.

If, as is more likely, they have not been told in words but have picked up on some behavioral cues, you can provide some recognition for their willingness to recognize a truth that most of us avoid.

4. Help Make Immediate Plans

Before the parent can figure out what to do next they need to recognize (and give themselves credit for) what they have already done. For example, they may have already reassured the child that they:

- believe what s/he has told them
- know it is not her/his fault
- are glad s/he told them about it
- are sorry about what happened
- will do their best to protect and support her/him.

If not, this is where to begin.

Encourage the parent to verbalize what may seem obvious; children misunderstand. Given information and sensing parental distress, they may assume the opposite of what is intended and conclude that it is their fault and that they shouldn't have told.

5. Provide Accurate Information as Needed

Some of the information that parents will need is basic information about sexual assaults of children. Most parents have little accurate information; they may have misinformation. Getting information can help overcome feelings of isolation and can be used to validate their concerns. This basic information might include the following:

- that children rarely lie about sexual assault
- how frequent child assault is
- that children are often not able to tell in words
- that offenders are *usually* known to the family.

Sometimes parents call with a suspicion that something has happened. You can help them to trust their feelings and to act on their suspicion.

Other needed information may relate to medical care or the criminal justice system and the local response to child victims. Or it may be information about offenders—to forewarn parents of the difficulties they will face from an offender who is probably known to them.

6. Listen to Fears, Concerns, Guilt

Learning that a sexual assault has occurred can be overwhelming. Parents will need an ear for their own concerns. Regardless of the circumstances parents tend to blame themselves (or to blame the child). Unless their concerns are heard they will be unable to put the blame where the blame belongs. Encourage parents to take care of themselves and to seek support.

If a parent was her/himself a child victim, feelings will be even more complicated.

7. Differentiate Parents' Concerns from Child's Concerns

The impact of the assault on the parents is usually very different from the impact on the child. You can help the parents understand that the child's concerns are not the same as theirs. You can give parents some ideas of what the child's concerns might be and encourage them to listen carefully to what the child says.

Sometimes parents' response to the assault gives a different message to the child than the one the parents intend. For example, parents may limit a child's activities in an attempt to provide a safeguard against further abuse or because they want the child

closer to them. The child may interpret the change as a punitive restriction or as an indication that s/he is not trusted or not considered competent.

8. Provide Advocacy Through All Stages

Active advocacy will be needed to ensure that the parents are able to get the best possible medical care and legal response for their child. Parents will need support and encouragement as they struggle to make decisions about what is best for their child.

9. Helping Children to Protect Themselves

Helping a child develop the skills to protect her/himself can be an important step in recovery. Just as adult victims need to regain control over their lives, so do children. Helping children to protect themselves reduces the likelihood of further victimization and also helps restore the child's sense of self esteem. Learning new skills and being encouraged to use them helps. Parents can express their approval of a child's efforts to stick up for her/himself, and express their faith in the child's capabilities.

RESOURCES

The resources on sexual abuse of children are extensive and have increased enormously since 1981. We have included only information which is directly related to prevention.

The listing which follows is a partial one. We have attempted to describe the resource so that potential users can make their own decisions about its suitability for their own work.

A complete listing of prevention materials and resources is available from the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1250, Chicago, Illinois 60604-4357. Ask for "Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Materials" - Working Paper No. 022.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

A Very Touching Book . . . for little people and for big people, Jan Hindman, illustrated by Tom Novak, McClure-Hindman Books, PO Box 208, Durkee, Oregon 97905.

A delightfully illustrated book - people of all ages, races, shapes for parents and children to read together. Uses the concepts 'good', 'bad' and 'secret' touching.

It's My Body, Lory Freeman, Planned Parenthood of Snohomish County "Book Orders," 2730 Hoyt, Everett, Washington 98201.

A booklet to teach preschoolers (3 - 6 years old) how to resist uncomfortable touch.

My Very Own Book About Me, Jo Stowell and Mary Dietzel. Drawings by Sally Pierone. Spokane Rape Crisis Network, Lutheran Social Service of Washington, North 1226 Howard, Spokane Washington 99201.

A workbook for kids, using the concepts of 'private parts' and 'OK touch' and 'not OK touch.' Text and sprightly drawings convey a great deal of information. Reinforces children's abilities and rights. A training video for teachers is also available: "My Very Own Book About Me," Migima Designs, PO Box 70064, Eugene, Oregon 97401. 1/2" video, 20 minutes.

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No More Secrets for Me, Oralee Wacher. Illustrated by Jane Aaron. Little Brown and Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02106.

Four stories about children dealing successfully with troublesome situations. In each, the child tells someone and gets help. The situations range from a babysitter who does not respect privacy to a step-father who touches in an exploitive way.

Once I Was a Little Bit Frightened, Joy Williams. Illustrated by David Lott. Rape and Abuse Center, P.O. Box 1655, Fargo, North Dakota 58107.

A brief story aimed at children in kindergarten through fifth grade. A dark, looming figure is used to illustrate "people (who) want to hurt girls and boys when they're alone" - Annie "wonders why some people do things to her" then goes "to a center where they talked to her and her Daddy."

Private Zone, Frances S. Dayee. The Chas. Franklin Press, 18401 90th Avenue West, Edmonds, Washington 98020.

A booklet for parents and children to read together. Builds on the notion that some body parts are "private zones."

Red Flag, Green Flag People, Joy Williams. Rape and Abuse Crisis Center, P.O. Box 1655, Fargo, North Dakota 58107.

A coloring book for 3-10-year-olds. Presents eight "red flag" situations. Seven involve strangers and one involves a relative: "When a relative touches you in a Red Flag way or a confusing way or makes you do things you don't understand it may be called incest."

You Belongs to You, YWCA/Sexual Assault Crisis Center, 310 East Third Street, Flint, Michigan 48502.

A coloring book for children using concepts of private parts, different kinds of touching, secrets and telling someone.

FILMS FOR CHILDREN

Better Safe Than Sorry, and *Better Safe Than Sorry II*, Filmfair Communications, 10900 Ventura Boulevard, Studio City, California 91604.

16 mm or video cassette, 14 1/2 minutes, Spanish version available.

Better Safe Than Sorry is aimed at 9-14 year olds and is a presentation of potential dangers. *Better Safe Than Sorry II* is a newer film and is aimed at the K-3 age group.

Boys Beware, and *Girls Beware*, AIMS Media, 626 Justin Avenue, Glendale, California 91201-2398.

16 mm or video cassette, 14 minutes & 12 minutes.

Both films use vignettes depicting the approaches of child molesters.

Child Molestation: A Crime Against Children, AIMS Media, 626 Justin Avenue, Glendale, California 91201-2398.

16 mm or video cassette, 11 minutes, color/sound.

This film is aimed at intermediate and junior high children and helps them to identify incest, and interviews some children who are victims.

Child Molestation: When to Say No, AIMS Media, 626 Justin Avenue, Glendale, California 91201-2398.

16 mm, 13 1/2 minutes, color/sound.

Depicts children being approached by strangers and suggests responses (e.g., don't take money). Also includes situations involving a neighbor and a relative. Children seem to like it. Needs discussion to balance approach. Intended for 4-8th graders, but is too young for 7th & 8th graders.

For Pete's Sake, Tell, Krause House, P.O. Box 880, Oregon City, Oregon 97045.

Filmstrip and audio cassette or 3/4" 1/2" videotape, 6 minutes. Available in Spanish.

Uses a mouse animated character and rhyming narrative. Comes with teaching guide. For grades 3-6.

It's OK to Say No! Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Migima Designs, P.O. Box 70064, Eugene, Oregon 97401.

Children discuss situations involving inappropriate touch.

No More Secrets, O.D.N. Productions, 74 Varick Street, Room 304, New York, New York 10013.

16 mm color film, 13 minutes.

A few friends, ages 8-10, exchange uneasy confidences about personal experiences they've had with sexual abuse. Has a positive

message about what kids can do to help themselves and each other.

Sometimes I Need to Say No, Rape Crisis Center of Syracuse, 423 West Onandaga Street, Syracuse, New York 13202

16 mm, 35 minutes

Originally a play for elementary school students. The approach is based on a privacy continuum—"some things are my own," "sometimes I need to say no," "sometimes I like to be touched (and sometimes I don't)."

Touch, MTI Teleprograms Inc., 108 Wilmot Road, Deerfield, Illinois 60015.

Co-produced by Media Ventures, Inc. and the Illusion Theater Company, 16 mm or video cassette, 32 minutes, color/sound.

Based on the Illusion Theater production, including good touch, bad touch, confusing touch. The film is aimed at K-6 age level. Teaches the right to trust feelings and to act on them.

Who Do You Tell, MTI Teleprograms, Inc., 108 Wilmot Road, Deerfield, Illinois 60015.

16 mm or 3/4" video cassette, 11 minutes, color/sound.

Includes both animation and footage of discussions among children. Depicts a broad range of problem situations, e.g., if you're lost, if your house catches fire. Relatively short amount of time on sexual assault. Good discussion started. Aimed at children 6–11.

BOOKS FOR PARENTS

No More Secrets: Protecting Your Child from Sexual Assault
Caren Adams, Jennifer Fay
Impact Publishers, San Luis Obispo, CA 1981

This book is easy to read and practical—not a collection of horror stories. Gives many suggestions of the actual words a parent may use with a child, and the experience of parents who've talked to their kids about sexual assault. Home tested recipes for getting "ooh-icks" out of children.

Includes: Ideas about screening baby sitters
Prevention games to play with children
Clues that may alert a parent that a caretaker is potentially dangerous
Suggestions for deciding when a child who has been assaulted needs therapy

Ideas for parents who want to get involved in getting prevention information into their school system

The Silent Children
Linda Tschirhart Sanford
Anchor Press, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1980

Extensive background information on sexual assault of children—definitions, explanations, etc. Half of the book focuses on raising children who are not as vulnerable to assault—developing self-esteem, self-confidence, learning to say no. Some attention is directed toward children with special needs.

Come Tell Me Right Away: A Positive Approach
Linda Tschirhart Stanford
New Victoria Printing Collective Lebanon, New Hampshire, 1982

Guidelines for parents, adapted from *The Silent Children*.

Childproof for Sexual Abuse
Prepared for Early Childhood & Parent Education Specialists
Parent Education Center of Yakima, 4823 Snowmountain Road, Yakima, Washington 98908

A booklet for parents designed to be used as part of small group parent study sessions. Includes sections on definitions, how and why to talk to your child, normal sexual development and activities for parents to use with children.

"He Told Me Not To Tell"
King County Rape Relief, 305 South 43rd Street, Renton, Washington 98055. 1979

(Included in manual.)

Protecting Your Child from Sexual Abuse: A Parents Guide
Janie Hart-Rossi
Planned Parenthood of Snohomish County, "Book Order," 2730 Hoyt, Everett, Washington 98201

Used in conjunction with *It's My Body* by Lory Freeman, but can also be used alone. For parents of 3-12 year olds. Based on the concept of helping kids learn when sharing their bodies is okay and not okay and self-esteem.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Project: An Educational Program for Children
Cordelia Kent
Hennipin County Attorney's Office, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Project, C-2000 Government Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55487. 1979

This is the work that has formed the basis for much of the current prevention work, including the touch continuum.

Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum
Committee for Children
P.O. Box 51049, Wedgewood Station, Seattle, Washington 98115

Curriculum and teacher training packet for elementary schools. Based on a decision-making model. Pictures are used to present situations concerning safety.

Curriculum For Developing an Awareness of Sexual Exploitation and Teaching Self-Protection Techniques
Developmental Disabilities Project
Seattle Rape Relief, 1825 South Jackson, Suite 102, Seattle, Washington 98144.

A comprehensive curriculum for the developmentally disabled. Uses audio tapes, pictures, supplemental stories and slide shows.

Personal Safety: Curriculum for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program
Skyline Elementary, 2301 North Mildred, Tacoma, Washington 98406

This program extends from K-12, includes teacher training.

Network Publications, a division of ETR Associates.
P.O. Box 8506, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-8506

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